



This Old Column

Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission

December 2003

Changes for 2004

Over the past year, the Commission and IHPC staff have kept our “*Ears Wide Open*” in an effort to hear your suggestions for streamlined processes, increased efficiency, and historic designation awareness. The IHPC adopted two new policies at the November hearing and has recently implemented a new program to increase property owner recognition of IHPC jurisdiction in locally designated areas. We hope you’ll continue to offer your feedback so we can continue to improve our services to you.

Policy Change for the Construction of New Garages:

New garages that ***do not*** include dwelling units or require variances of use or development standards may now be heard at the **weekly** public hearing conducted by our Hearing Officer. Previously, all garages that were larger than 2 bays and/or taller than one story in height were required to be heard at the **monthly** commission hearing. Legal notice to registered neighborhood organizations and surrounding property owners will remain the same. New garages incorporating separate dwelling units or requiring any variance of use or development standards will continue to be heard at the monthly commission hearing.

This change maintains the opportunity for public input and design improvements from the review process. Moving these relatively simpler cases from Commission agendas to the Hearing Officer will allow the Commission additional time to hear complex cases and will give applicants quicker decisions on garages.

Policy Change for Filing Deadlines:

Two changes were approved regarding the date of filing deadlines:

1. The filing deadline day has changed from Friday to Thursday
2. The deadline for Certificate of Appropriateness applications requiring a Commission hearing has been lengthened.

Applications for all public hearings will now be due on ***Thursdays*** each week – ***two weeks prior to hearing officer hearings and thirty-five (35) days prior to commission hearings.*** A 2004

deadline schedule is attached for your convenience.

Previously, Certificate of Appropriateness applications for both IHPC and Hearing Officer hearings were due on Friday each week – two weeks prior to the hearing. However, rezoning or variance petitions were due 35 days prior to the Commission hearing. This change makes the deadlines for all requests requiring a Commission hearing consistent, eliminating past confusion. In addition, it addresses a perennial concern that surrounding property owners and neighborhood associations have enough time to review requests prior to a hearing. Notices to surrounding property owners and other interested parties now must be sent out 23 days before the hearing rather than the previous 14 days.

New “Welcome Wagon” Program:

New property owners in historic districts are often unaware their property is located within a local historic district and under IHPC jurisdiction. Occasionally, this lack of awareness creates problems for residents, neighborhood associations, and IHPC staff. To help mitigate such misunderstandings, staff has developed a “Welcome Wagon” program. Now, when staff becomes aware that a property is for sale, a packet that can be shared with prospective buyers will be mailed to the realtor. The packet includes a letter, brochures about IHPC and Design Review, and an example of the legally recorded “Notification of Historic Designation” document that is recorded with each property’s deed. The letter states that property owners must receive “approval for any exterior modifications, site improvements, new construction, demolition, and land use changes in local historic districts” prior to performing work and asks realtors to disclose this information to potential buyers.

IHPC staff encourages neighborhood organizations and individuals to contact us when a new “for sale” sign is spotted. Please contact Emily Mack at 327-4432 or emack@indygov.org. All we need is the property address, name of the real estate company, and the listing realtor (if known).

If you have questions regarding the Policy & Procedure changes or the “Welcome Wagon” program, please contact IHPC Staff at 317-327-4406. Thank you for all your suggestions. We look forward to working with you in the new year!

